AN

ENQUIRY,

WHETHER THE

ABSOLUTE INDEPENDENCE

OF

AMERICA

IS NOT TO BE PREFERR'D TO HER

PARTIAL DEPENDENCE,

AS MOST AGREEABLE TO THE REAL INTERESTS OF

GREAT BRITAIN.

ADDRESSED TO THE

PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN,

BY

ONE OF THEMSELVES.

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AN

ENQUIRY, &c.

TO ſtem the torrent of popular prejudice is an attempt of all others the moſt arduous, and leaſt promiſing of ſucceſs; it is beſides attended with every circumſtance that can diſcourage, for while it is certain of rendering one part of mankind our enemy, it is not equally certain of ſecuring the patronage of the other. The generality of mankind are too impatient of contradiction, ſeriouſly to examine reaſonings incompatible with their own haſty concluſions; and the few who ſubmit to this unuſual condeſcenſion,

however they may correct their errors, are ſeldom ſufficiently candid to acknowledge the ſource of their converſion.

But as popular applauſe is by no means the object of this addreſs, uninfluenced by the ſordid views of private intereſt, or the leſs excuſable ones of faction, and ſolely inſtigated by the *amor patriæ*, ſo much approved of in theory, tho' ſo ſeldom diſcernible in practice; I ſhall, with due deference, ſubmit to the Public ſuch arguments as, after due deliberation, have induced me to diſſent from the prevailing opinion.

At a criſis like the preſent, every where ſurrounded with danger, it well behoves us ſeriouſly to weigh the tendency of every propoſition to terminate our unhappy differences with America. Feeling equally with the reſt of mankind the diſtreſſes and calamities of war, and equally panting for the bleſſings of peace, I yet am perſuaded too much may be ſacrificed to its attainment.

War, however juſt in its original cauſe, ceaſes to be juſt when the permanent advantages of peace are within our power, but rejected;

jected; the national ſpirit of this country has in general induced this exceſs; and, as an eminent author (Hume) well obſerves, "our wars with France have been begun with juſtice, and even, perhaps, from neceſſity, but have always been too far puſhed by obſtinacy and paſſion."

The juſtneſs of our preſent conteſt with America is a point upon which I am neither inclined nor prepared to offer an opinion; ſuffice it for me that we are engaged in the unnatural conteſt; and ſo violent is the public odium againſt its further proſecution, that, departing from its general characteriſtic, it appears ready to ſacrifice the moſt important conſiderations to that of peace. The general zeal for this event is certainly laudable in itſelf, but does it not tranſport the public too far? may it not lay the foundation of greater evils than thoſe we now experience? I apprehend it may, and, without the utmoſt caution, I dread it will.

The duly preſerving of that equilibrium of our conſtitution, whence we derive every advantage foreign or domeſtic, is the moſt important

portant conſideration to be attended to; to *that*, I will be bold enough to ſay, ought readily to be ſacrificed every foreign poſſeſſion, as a ſecondary object; for, deprived of *that*, every advantage held forth by *the other* muſt ceaſe, or become an inconvenience. What benefit has accrued to the Spaniard from his large and wealthy poſſeſſions? does he now enjoy the ſweets of a more free conſtitution? has his much coveted wealth enabled him to throw off the yoke of deſpotiſm? has it not rather rivetted his chains the more cloſe, and rendered his ſervitude the more intolerable? Let us take benefit from the experience of others; *alienis periculis cauti*, let us be convinced of one important truth, I might term it an axiom, for ſurely nothing can be more ſelf-evident than that extent of empire is not eſſential to a free conſtitution; but I ſhall go a little farther in my aſſertion, and truſt to prove by argument, that, of all conſtitutions, the conſtitution of England is leaſt adapted to extent of Empire; its very principles are inſurmountable obſtacles to extenſive dominion, and either the principles muſt

muſt confine the empire, or the empire ſubvert the principles. Should it ever be ſeriouſly agitated, whether we ſhall give up the principles or dominion, I am perſuaded every well-wiſher to his country will approve the ceſſion of the latter, in order to the ſecurity of the former. But wherefore retain the principles longer than they are conducive to the end, is a poſition to be ſupported by thoſe whoſe opinions I am now to controvert.

The Conſtitution of England is founded on reaſon, and ſound policy, differing from the conſtitution of every other ſtate principally in this, that while it has provided for public liberty, it has not renounced monarchy. To maintain a Conſtitution of this deſcription requires a moſt jealous attention to its ſeveral conſtituent parts. Hiſtory fully evinces the abſolute neceſſity of checking every attempt of either, to acquire an aſcendency over the others, as the ſucceſs of every attempt of that nature, either on the part of the Monarch, Nobles or Commons, has uniformly proved equally fatal to the people, by annihilating

annihilating, for the time, their deareſt rights and intereſts.

" In a conſtitution like ours," ſays my Lord Bolingbroke, " the ſafety of the whole depends upon the balance of the parts; and the balance of the parts on their mutual independency on each other." To provide for this equilibrium has been the principal object of antient and modern patriotiſm; various have been the means deviſed, but none has proved ſo effectual as eſtabliſhing the doctrine of repreſentation in order to taxation as a fundamental principle; declaring it inconſiſtent with the dignity of a free People, that even the exigencies of their Government ſhould be ſupplied in any other manner than as approved of, and aſſented to, by the majority. But how is this principle to have force in every part of our extenſive dominions? Muſt Great Britain bear the whole expence of its ſeveral dependencies, or muſt her moſt diſtant provinces be repreſented in the Britiſh legiſlature? the firſt of theſe propoſitions is as impoſſible and unreaſonable, as the latter is abſurd and impracticable; but

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if not repreſented in the Britiſh legiſlature, by the Britiſh legiſlature, agreeable to the above principle, they cannot be taxed: No, not even in order to defray the neceſſary expences of the ſtate.

Here I am aware, it will be aſked, Is not the repreſentation, even of Great Britain, at variance with this principle? Why then ſo ſtrenuouſly inſiſt on the injuſtice of not extending it to America? I muſt admit the repreſentation of this country to be by no means proportioned to the number of Electors, nor the number of Electors agreeable to this conſtitutional Principle. But whence does it proceed? Where is lodged that exceſs of authority which of itſelf can deprive any, the meaneſt Subject of this invaluable privilege —this unalienable inheritance? In what Aſſembly are we to ſearch for that power which, by the majority of a ſingle vote, can annihilate the fundamental rights of thoſe from whom they derive it? Can a Truſtee renounce the conditions, or defeat the purpoſes, yet retain the advantages of his truſt? With no greater conſiſtency nor juſtice can the Repre-

 ſentatives

ſentatives of a free people, exclude any of thoſe by whom they are deputed, and whoſe intereſts they are bound to promote, from the future exerciſe of the right of voting for members to repreſent them in the legiſlature of their country. But ſtill the fact is, that a part, nay a majority of Britiſh ſubjects are bound by laws, in the enacting of which they have no ſhare whatever: to warrant this, it is not ſufficient to ſay with Sir William Blackſtone that none are entirely excluded but thoſe who can have no will of their own; this is ſpecious, but by no means concluſive; for the ſame will which was competent to inveſt *them* with the right of legiſlation, would ſurely be equally competent, at a future period, to reinveſt them, or to elect others.

It has been obſerved that "thoſe who have no vote for electing a repreſentative, are not *free men* as juſtice and the conſtitution require, but are enſlaved to the repreſentatives of thoſe who *have* votes: for to be enſlaved is to have *no will of our own* in the choice of law makers, but to be governed by rulers whom *others have ſet over us.*"

If

If this Deſcription of ſlavery is juſt, which I conceive it to be, every Engliſhman being, by the principles of natural juſtice, provided for and ſecured by thoſe of our conſtitution, *by birth a free*-man, what Legiſlature, what ſet of Men, can deprive any individual of an actual repreſentation, and thereby reduce him to ſlavery? Was this queſtion to be diſcuſſed at this time of day, when experience hath demonſtrated the abſolute neceſſity of a more complete repreſentation, I am convinced the majority of my countrymen would agree with me, that there was no ſuch power, nor could there exiſt ſuch a power in a free Conſtitution.

By the operation of the ſtatute 8. Hen. VI. a very great majority of Engliſhmen are debarred from their birth-right of voting for members to ſerve in Parliament, a ſacred inheritance tenaciouſly aſſerted, and to them tranſmitted by their anceſtors. The reaſon aſſigned for this violation of the conſtitution is, that perſons not poſſeſſed of 40s. a year freehold, could hardly be preſumed to have a will of their own, and conſequently would

be too much expoſed to the influence or corruption of the artful or wealthy Candidate. This is the ſole reaſon adduced in juſtification of this unconſtitutional ſtatute. If it is a ſufficient reaſon, and if it is not evidently more eaſy to corrupt a few than many, wherefore is not the ſpirit of this ſtatute ſtill adhered to? that is, why has not the qualification encreaſed, as the value of money has diminiſhed, which, according to the general calculation, is ten to one; what was in the reign of Henry VI. equivalent to 40s. being now equivalent to 20l.? The qualification, however, continues as originally ſettled; to have raiſed it agreeable to the ſpirit of the act had too much reduced the number of Electors, and the attempt might have proved at leaſt dangerous. If the ſtatute 8. of Hen. VI. was founded in reaſon, juſtice, and on conſtitutional principles, the dread of evil conſequences alone can have deterred later legiſlatures from this ſtep, ſo immediately eſſential to carry the original deſign into effect, for certainly the ſame Power which can preſcribe one reſtriction, may preſcribe a thouſand,

the

the ſame power which can exclude all perſons, not poſſeſſing a freehold of 40s. per annum, from a ſhare in the repreſentation of their country, may at any future period, with equal right, exclude all ſuch as are not poſſeſſed of 40l. or any ſum they may chuſe to fix upon.

But this is a right I am inclined to contend cannot exiſt in a conſtitution founded on the principles of freedom, and which determines that none but thoſe who have a ſhare in the legiſlature ſhall be bound by its laws. It will not be ſufficient to anſwer, that every individual, though not *actually*, is *virtually* repreſented in the legiſlature of this country. A *virtual* repreſentation is unknown to a *free* conſtitution, and cannot be reconciled with the above principle of ours. The members of the Britiſh Houſe of Commons are Repreſentatives of none, but of thoſe by whom they are deputed; they are their immediate Truſtees, and theirs only; for from them alone they receive their truſt. But ſhall the Truſtee of A. diſpoſe of the property of B. merely becauſe A. and B. happen to reſide in the

ſame

ſame Town or County? if not, the principles of our conſtitution demand a more full and complete repreſentation of its ſubjects, for many, indeed the majority, are bound by laws, in the enacting of which they have not the ſmalleſt ſhare or influence. It might, perhaps, be attended with ſome inconvenience, ſhould we at this important criſis aſſert this invaluable privilege; but I am well convinced the preſent inconveniences more than counterbalance any that could reſult from a vindication of our antient right. Here would I reſt the matter, were I not apprehenſive that many of my fellow citizens have been impoſed upon with regard to the *antient* right of repreſentation; I ſhall, therefore, conciſely touch upon it.

Of whom might formerly have conſiſted the *Wittenagemote, commune concilium,* or other great councils of the ſtate, is a point, if not wholly foreign, at leaſt immaterial to the preſent queſtion. The ſame ſtatute of Henry VI. which excludes all Perſons not poſſeſſed of 40s. freehold per annum from the right of voting at elections, of itſelf proves that, *until*

til the enacting of that ſtatute, *thoſe* perſons thereby excluded enjoyed *that* right, the common right of all; nor can I ſeriouſly be asked, at this time of day, whence they derived that right? from what grant or conceſſion of the ſovereign? The principles of reaſon and natural juſtice, the very baſis of our conſtitution, inveſted them with it, and rendered it unalienable by any human inſtitution. But the ſtatute 8th Henry VI. does controul it. Whether conſiſtent with the principles of the conſtitution, is open to the opinion of every Engliſhman.—To me, this concluſion neceſſarily ariſes, that either the before-mentioned principle never did, or ought to exiſt, or that the practice varying from the theory, demands the attention of every well-wiſher to his country and its conſtitution.

Another fallacy has likewiſe crept into the doctrine of repreſentation, ariſing from the abuſe in the practice, which makes property the ſole object of repreſentation; that *it is* in our preſent ſyſtem of repreſentation is as evident, as that it *was not*, until the ſtatute of

Hen.

Hen. VI. But ſhall the practice determine the theory, or the theory regulate the practice? Happily for us, either deciſion is in favour of a more complete repreſentation; for the practice until the 8th of Hen. VI. *was* as clearly in favour of it, as *is* the *pure* conſtitutional doctrine of repreſentation, but whoſe advantages have been eluded by ſubſtituting a *virtual* for an *actual* repreſentation? Will any one contend that thoſe natural rights, for the ſecurity of which government was originally inſtituted, are now no longer the objects of legiſlation; but that they are reſolved into the providing for and ſecuring of property, the mere creature of civil government? Should they ſucceed in this poſition, I muſt admit that none but perſons poſſeſſed of property are entitled to a ſhare in the repreſentation. Conceiving, however, ſuch poſition too abſurd to be ſeriouſly maintained, the ſecurity of our natural rights being ſtill the primary object of our legiſlation, I am ready to contend, and truſt to meet with the concurrence of thouſands, that every, the pooreſt Engliſhman, whoſe

natural

natural rights can be controuled, or in any, the leaſt degree, abridged by an act of Parliament, is as fully entitled to an *actual* repreſentation, as is the proprietor of the moſt extenſive and wealthy poſſeſſions; and having an *equal* right, has *more* need, for it is his *ſole* ſecurity. Little reaſon is there to apprehend its abuſe; too valuable are the rights thereby to be ſecured—too fatal the conſequences which muſt reſult.*

The ſage Monteſquieu obſerves that "moſt citizens are qualified to chooſe their Magiſtrates, though unqualified to be choſen." The general good is ever their object; of the perſons moſt likely to effect it they are fully competent to determine. Why then deny them the exerciſe of that right, to which they are not only entitled, but for which they are alſo qualified? By what authority is its exerciſe refuſed them? I ſhall be told by the tranſcendant authority of an

* Sir Wm. Blackſtone, 4 vol. p. 8. "The lawfulneſs of puniſhing criminals is founded upon this principle, that the law by which they ſuffer, was made by *their own* conſent."

Act of Parliament, which hath power to do any thing that is not *naturally* impoſſible, and which therefore hath been termed (though admitted to be rather too bold a figure) the Omnipotence of Parliament. An attribute which even thoſe who have aſſigned it have rendered queſtionable, by inadvertently limiting its power; but as Omnipotence might prove miſchievous unleſs accompanied by omniſcience; the ſame partizans tell us it is a power which *can do no wrong*, 1 Blackſtone, 244. Hence we find our ſtatute books teeming with repeals of thoſe acts which former legiſlatures in their infinite wiſdom thought fit to enact; hence we find this ſame Omnipotence preſcribing bounds to its own exiſtence, when its power *muſt* expire, or, to ſpeak in the language of the ſame learned commentator, when it *muſt* die a *natural* death. Strange inconſiſtencies! but to which thoſe are ever expoſed, who exalt the Power of Prince or Parliament at the expence of truth and the conſtitution.

Since then this Omipotency of Parliament is a mere phantom, raiſed as the ſucceſſor

ceſſor of the divine indefeaſible right of princes; and ſince infallibility is no more the lot of legiſlators than of individuals; we may raiſe our eyes, nor fear to be blinded by the rays of that tribunal, whoſe power is but the delegated power of individuals, whoſe Majeſty is but the Majeſty of the people. We may inſpect its acts, nor dread the guilt of diving into myſteries too ſacred for vulgar diſquiſition: we may queſtion how far the ſtatute 8th Henry VI. correſponds with its boaſted omniſcience, or with the principles of that conſtitution whence alone its members derive their power. Of this it may be thought more than enough has been ſaid for the preſent purpoſe; nor had I been ſo prolix, but that, however it may appear a digreſſion, it will preſently be found materially connected with the ſubject immediately before us. For if it be true that the truſtee of A cannot diſpoſe of the property of B merely becauſe A and B happen to reſide in the ſame town or county, when it may, with ſome degree of reaſon, be contended, that the intereſt of the truſ-

tee of A being inſeparable from that of B a ſufficient ſecurity is provided for the conduct of the truſtee of A, and for the intereſt of B, and when it may likewiſe be ſaid that B, not being poſſeſt of a certain property, is incapable of having a will of *his own*, and on that account excluded a ſhare in the Legiſlation. By what logic ſhall we prove the truſtee of A to have a right to make laws to bind C, having a greater property than A, or poſſibly than his truſtee, reſiding at the diſtance of three thouſand miles, whoſe intereſt is not only diſtinct but unknown, and whoſe Contribution to the exigencies of the State muſt regulate the demand on the truſtee of A; the latter lowering in due proportion to the riſing of the former: What ſecurity has C in ſuch a ſituation? Has he not every thing to dread from the powerful motives of ſelf intereſt? May he not reaſonably ſuſpect that the truſtee of A, in taxing *him*, will argue thus within himſelf; If by the taxation of C a ſufficient revenue is derived to the State I eaſe myſelf of every demand; and what prevents it? all who are equally competent with

myſelf

myſelf to tax C are ſwayed by the ſame motives with myſelf, one and the ſame intereſt prevailing.—Fatal experience proves ſuch ſuſpicion would be too well founded. If, therefore, agreeable to the doctrine of Repreſentation and Taxation going hand in hand, the truſtee of A cannot tax B reſiding in the ſame County, having the ſame intereſts, ſubject to the ſame Laws; *a Fortiori*, he ſhall not tax C having a larger property, but ſeparate intereſts, or rather repugnant intereſts, and reſiding at the diſtance of three thouſand miles,

This is the neceſſary concluſion, unleſs the principle itſelf is denied and done away; but, conceiving that impoſſible, I reſt this point here.

The queſtion then reſults, ſhall we give up the doctrine of Repreſentation in order to Legiſlation, or ſhall we give up our diſtant Provinces claiming its benefit.

This is the dilemma in which Great Britain has long been, and ſtill continues, with regard to America; ever to be honoured is he or thoſe who can deviſe any poſſible means of removing

ing thoſe difficulties, which, to my poor judgment, in the preſent ſtate of affairs appear inſuperable.

A propoſition now ſtarted, though by no means new, ſeems to gain almoſt univerſal approbation; ſorry am I, that to me it ſhould appear in ſo different a light; its abſurdities ſo glaring, its evil conſequences ſo certain, its advantages merely temporary.

The propoſition is this: let Great Britain and America be governed by diſtinct Legiſlatures, but ſubject to one common Sovereign, then we may retain the principle of Repreſentation, and alſo our foreign poſſeſſions—ſhallow device, for even a ſhallow Politician! yet it was hinted at in a late Debate upon Iriſh Affairs, by an Honourable Member of the Lower Houſe; and I am free to confeſs his ſeeming adoption of the idea firſt ſuggeſted to my mind the propriety of this Appeal to the public judgment, conceiving that, in a matter of ſuch general importance, the diſintereſted efforts of the meaneſt abilities to throw new light on the ſubject, would meet with the indulgence of the candid,

candid, and might poſſibly eſcape the cenſure of the multitude.

That this Propoſition is agreeable to the *literal* conſtruction of the principle of ſelf-taxation is indiſputable; but is it agreeable to the object of that principle, the due maintenance of that Equilibrium eſſential to our Conſtitution? An eminent writer (De Lolme) on our Conſtitution, ſpeaking of this right, conſiders it as the regular means conferred on the Subjects by the Conſtitution of influencing the Motions of the executive Power, the tie by which the latter is bound to them, in ſhort, a ſure pledge in their hands, that the Sovereign, who, by virtue of his Prerogative, can diſmiſs their Repreſentatives at his pleaſure, will not entertain thoughts of ruling without them. Without this privilege every attempt to check the innovations of Prerogative might eaſily be defeated by the Sovereign; for to every Act (ſhould the Sovereign even deign to aſſemble a Parliament) the royal aſſent is eſſential; but how could we expect ſuch

ſuch aſſent to an Act purpoſely framed to abridge his Authority ?

Should I prove that this Propoſition muſt, in all human probability, ſubvert the end for which the principle of ſelf-taxation was eſtabliſhed, it will, in ſuch caſe, be incumbent on others to ſhew the advantage to be derived from retaining the principle, not merely longer than as conducive to, but when evidently ſubverſive of the end.

That to the Right of withholding ſupplies is chiefly to be imputed the ſucceſsful reſiſtance of the legiſlative, to the encroachments of the executive power, appears from the whole tenor of Engliſh Hiſtory ; at leaſt from the period when this invaluable Right was firſt aſſerted.—To this we are indebted for every confirmation of our Liberty on the part of the Sovereign, or rather for every ſucceſsful vindication of it on the part of our Repreſentatives ; hence we derive the famous Petition of Right, as ſtrenuouſly oppoſed by the Sovereign, whoſe oppreſſive overgrown power it was adapted to reſtrain, as inſiſted upon by the Commons ;

mons; in the conteſt every nerve of Prerogative was ſtrained, the ſole weapon on the part of the ſubject was this Right of withholding ſupplies; as often as the Sovereign aſked them to ſupply his wants, ſo often was he given to underſtand that a redreſs of public grievances muſt precede their concurrence; Tyranny was ſtartled at the perſeverance of Patriotiſm; three ſucceſſive Parliaments fired with equal virtue, and determined on the ſame laudable end were diſſolved; but the royal neceſſities, ever increaſing, at length extorted the confirmation of thoſe rights which the voice of Truth, Reaſon, Humanity, and our Conſtitution, had ever declared to be our due.—Neceſſity triumphed over the exertions of deſpotiſm, manifeſted to the Sovereign the dependence of his ſtation; and to his ſubjects the advantages of a Free Conſtitution: hence it is clear, that to a Free Conſtitution, the Right of withholding ſupplies is eſſential; but the advantages of this Right ſolely depends on the Unity of its Poſſeſſors, by depriving the Sovereign of every other reſource:—For, to recur to the Petition of

Right, was not every other reſource exhauſted before Charles could be prevailed upon to aſſemble his ſecond or third Parliament? Does any one ſeriouſly doubt but that he had been happy to have diſpenſed with the aſſiſtance of Parliament? and what prevented him, but the Conſtitution having lodged the Right of voting ſubſidies in the Legiſlature, and there *only*?

If, therefore, the Right of granting, or withholding ſupplies, being confined to the Legiſlature, has hitherto proved the Bulwark of our Liberties, the moſt effectual Check on ſtern Prerogative; and if it be true, that its advantages depend upon the Unity of its Poſſeſſors, was it once divided, or rather extended, and each province of America, or the whole continent of America in a Repreſentative Body, diſtinct from the Britiſh Legiſlature, were permitted to tax themſelves, that is, to grant ſupplies to the Crown, is it not evident, that check of Prerogative would be conſiderably weakened, indeed rendered nugatory? For the reſources of the Sovereign increaſed, his dependence

muſt diminiſh; but it would not only be nugatory, but alſo dangerous to withhold ſupplies; the Sovereign meeting with an obſtinate refuſal from the one, might chance to meet with a more ready compliance from the other. That mutual jealouſly which ever muſt ſubſiſt between perſons armed with equal powers, would ſerve but to promote the Independence of the Sovereign, and to cruſh themſelves; for till it can be proved that men in a collective body are not ſubject to the ſame paſſions and influence which experience evinces to operate ſo powerfully on Individuals, I cannot but contend that mutual jealouſly muſt, as a neceſſary conſequence, pervade the Britiſh and American Legiſlatures: if ſo, the reſiſtance of either to the unreaſonable demands of the Crown, might, in ſuch ſtate of Rivalſhip, be defeated by the means conceded by the other; and the event muſt prove fatal to both ——For either the doctrine of Repreſentation and Taxation is ſubverted, or the other compliant Legiſlature is ſubjected to the expence of the whole Empire. The Equilibrium

once

once deſtroyed, the Legiſlature kicks the beam, and our Conſtitution is no more.

Should America accede to this propoſition ſhe can have no other view than to manifeſt her Loyalty to the common Sovereign; and to this amounted the declaration of Dr. Franklin, when examined by the Houſe of Commons in the year 1766; in other words, to rival Great Britain in the liberality of her grants. Should it take effect, we may conclude the Influence of the Crown has not increaſed, nor ought to be diminiſhed; but that the Influence of the Britiſh Legiſlature has increaſed and ought to be diminiſhed; and truly, for this evil in the State, the remedy propoſed is of all others the moſt likely to prove effectual, for it at once removes, I might ſay, the only Conſtitutional Check of Prerogative, and ſubſtituting firſt principles, can alone ſupply its deficiency. The evils of ſuch reſource are too obvious to need any remark, yet it would be the *ſole* reſource.

It is not ſufficient for us merely to extricate ourſelves from the preſent difficulties,

we muſt do ſomething more—eradicate their cauſes; we muſt cautiouſly provide for that Conſtitution, which we are bound to tranſmit to poſterity, if not improved, at leaſt, as perfect and complete as we received it from our Anceſtors. But to effect this, we muſt guard againſt every contingency; not merely againſt the common infirmities of Humanity, but againſt the depravity of the moſt abandoned. We cannot always expect in our Sovereigns the ſame benevolence, the ſame parental tenderneſs we now experience; a Tudor, or a Stuart, may once more fill the Throne. But how ſhall we check their Tyranny?—we are no longer the excluſive Proprietors of the means; a jealous neighbour is equally capable with ourſelves of ſupplying the royal wants; their compliance defeats our Patriotiſm; Oppoſition muſt either be ſilenced by the ſoft Influence of American gold, or America become the ſeat of Empire; for it were vain to imagine even Tyranny ſo ungrateful or abſurd, as to prefer reſiding amongſt thoſe who oppoſe, to a reſidence

reſidence with thoſe who are all compliance with its views.—An abdication enſues—firſt principles are recurred to—the next probable event need not be pointed out.

Theſe are the evils of which I wiſh my fellow Citizens to be apprized; theſe are the evils which to me appear as neceſſarily reſulting from the above Propoſition: whether any human precautions can prevent them, is to me doubtful, certain I am, none ſuch have hitherto been ſuggeſted; but it well behoves us to be aſſured of ſuch, before we accede to a meaſure, which otherwiſe muſt infallibly involve us in all the Calamities of Deſpotiſm, or, perhaps, what is worſe, in thoſe of Anarchy and Licentiouſneſs.

The preſent is poſſibly the moſt awful moment of Britiſh Politics; the jealous eyes of all Europe are intent upon our conduct, eagerly watching for that period, when Britain, blind to her deareſt intereſts, ſhall conclude with her Colonies a Treaty, which cannot but do away that which is at once the object of their aſtoniſhment and envy,

the Conſtitution of England. But ſhall we heedleſs of the Danger ſtand by, nor ſtretch forth our Arms to guard from violation the nobleſt edifice human invention ever deviſed, or human valour ever defended? ſhall we ungratefully ſuffer its corner ſtone to be removed? or, ſhall we wildly imagine the Temple of Liberty can ſtand, though its pillars be removed to the diſtance of three thouſand miles? No! Let every well-wiſher to his Country aſſert his Right; inſiſt on our Conſtitution retaining the ſame uniformity which has hitherto proved ſo beneficial to its Subjects. Let Miniſters concede what they will beſides; Colonies, Iſlands, Fortreſſes, &c. theſe are but the mere appendages of State; but in honour to the wiſdom of thoſe who deviſed, in gratitude to thoſe who with their Lives have let us preſerve inviolate a Conſtitution, whoſe perfections defended induced the Antients to pronounce, that none ſuch could ever exiſt but in theory. Happily for us we have actually enjoyed its Order without Tyranny, Liberty without Licentiouſneſs.

Let

Let not the ſelfiſh apprehenſion of America becoming our rivals in commerce alarm and deter us from confirming her abſolute unconditional independence; for we may be aſſured the fluctuation of trade materially depends upon ourſelves. Commerce, like Arts and Sciences, aſſumes a more vigorou s complexion in the ſoil of civil Liberty; it never quits any country while that country retains its induſtry and populouſneſs; a *free* Conſtitution neceſſarily ſecures thoſe requiſites, and muſt as neceſſarily ſecure the conſequence, an extenſive and advantageous commerce.

Nor let the dread of an emigration induce us to riſque the welfare of *both* countries; too partial is the mind of an Engliſhman to his native ſpot and civil Liberty, to relinquiſh them but with a view of greater advantages; greater advantages cannot exiſt where an equal ſhare of Liberty does not prevail; but admitting our every fear to be too well founded, and that America when once acknowledged independent of this country, ſhould hold forth ſuch ſuperior advantages as to invite a general emigration, it will be ſome conſolation to the

feelings

feelings of Patriotiſm, that when the ſun of Britain ſets, it ſets but to riſe with greater luſtre in the weſtern orb, and that its Conſtitution, like the Phœnix, rears from its aſhes one, if poſſible, more perfect than itſelf. But let us not think it, like the ſame bird, incapable of a partner. Great Britain and America may mutually ſhare all the advantages that give a zeſt to life and its enjoyments; let them be rivals but in induſtry and virtue, in every thing elſe ſteady, inſeparable friends. But ſhould America diſdain the friendſhip of Great Britain, let ſuch conduct, as ill judged as it would be ungrateful, act as a ſpur to Britons, excite their induſtry, and rouſe them to unanimity. Let them recollect the freedom of their Conſtitution was prior even to the diſcovery of America; conſequently independent of America, let them bear in mind the words of Sir E. Coke, cited by the immortal Junius, that "When poor England ſtood alone, and had not the acceſs of another kingdom, and yet had more and as potent enemies as it hath now, yet the King of England prevailed."

But admitting, as I have done before, our every fear to be well founded, one ſingle queſtion muſt determine our conduct. Is Great Britain juſtified by the principles of reaſon or juſtice in *actually* invading the rights of others in order to *prevent* any evil to which their *own might* otherwiſe be expoſed? I have already attempted to ſhew that Great Britain has no poſſible means, conſiſtent with her ſafety, of complying with the demands of America, however reaſonable, and actually growing out of her own conſtitution. She cannot be repreſented in the Britiſh Legiſlature; and a diſtant Legiſlation would neceſſarily expoſe both countries too much to the power and influence of the Sovereign; the grand queſtion then reſults: ſhall Great Britain concede to America an entire independency, or whether, by retaining a partial dependency, hitherto unknown to her Conſtitution, riſque the Conſtitution itſelf! To me it appears to carry a deciſive anſwer along with it, and with me, I truſt, will agree all thoſe who have attentively turned the ſubject in their thoughts; thoſe who have not, muſt

ſurely

ſurely be rouzed to reflection by a ſenſe of that ſtorm, even now impending over the head of every Briton, threatening annihilation to his deareſt Rights and Liberties.

Before I conclude, it may not be improper to examine an argument much inſiſted on in favour of a diſtinct American Legiſlation.

Ireland has long and ſtill continues to enjoy the right of ſelf taxation, diſtinct from the Britiſh Legiſlature; why then refuſe that to America which is confirmed to Ireland; Is ſhe not equally entitled to the advantages of your Conſtitution? Has ſhe not ever manifeſted the ſame good inclination towards you? Certainly ſhe has, and is equally entitled to our favour and protection, but that which is now propoſed as her right, and due to her by every tie of gratitude and generoſity, upon an analyſis is found to be a mere gilded pill, replete with the moſt deſtructive poiſons, and ſhall we, conſcious of the deception, tender her, under the maſk of friendſhip, what threatens to involve her with ourſelves in all

the

the miſeries of deſpotiſm or anarchy? Let thoſe who inſiſt ſo ſtrenuouſly on America being eſtabliſhed in the ſame rights with Ireland, that is, to have a diſtinct Legiſlature, determine whether Ireland's enjoying ſuch right has at *no time* proved the ſource of inconvenience to both countries? Whether the Sovereign has at *no time* derived conſiderable influence from this additional reſource? Whether members of the Britiſh Legiſlature have at *no time* been penſioners on the Iriſh eſtabliſhment? Whether the grand object at the Revolution, of purchaſing the hereditary revenue with the civil liſt was not, in a great degree, defeated by the old revenue in that kingdom continuing under the ſame circumſtances as the like funds were in England before 1688? Has not the legality of granting penſions on this eſtabliſhment been queſtioned? Has it not been imputed as a ſource of that influence, determined by an ever-memorable vote of the Commons, to have increaſed, to be increaſing, and to demand diminution? If I am not groſsly miſtaken, theſe ſeveral

queſtions

queſtions carry deciſive anſwers along with them in favour of my argument; for if the diſtinct right of voting ſupplies enjoyed by Ireland has proved a ſource of that influence ſo much complained of, why wiſh to ſee America in a ſimilar ſituation? If the ſmall revenue from Ireland is an inconvenience, what muſt prove that revenue which America, in a very ſhort period, will be capable of, and, if we may rely on Dr. Franklin, willing to afford her Sovereign? The meaſure was certainly impolitic as to Ireland; I mean not to arraign any of the late renunciations to that country; they were due to them according to the principles of our Conſtitution; they were before in full poſſeſſion of what alone ought to have excited our jealous apprehenſions—the right of granting ſupplies; to their honour be it ever aſcribed that we have not experienced greater evils. But a ſimilar conceſſion to America would be ſomething more than impolitic, it would be dangerous; a vaſt tract of country containing within itſelf, reſources nearly inexhauſtible,

ſituated

ſituated at ſo great a diſtance, courting to become the ſeat of empire, muſt neceſſarily ſucceed in the event; an event by no means to be equally dreaded ſhould Ireland ever abuſe this right; the propinquity of her ſituation expoſing her more to the vigilance, and to the reſentment of this country, and by no means holding forth equal inducements to the Sovereign.

Once more then let me exhort my fellow Citizens to reject, *unâ voce*, every propoſition of ſo fatal a tendency; let them conſider the abſolute Independence of America, an evil, yet a neceſſary evil, and as much to be preferred to her partial dependence on the Sovereign as our Conſtitution is preferable to Tyranny, Liberty to extent of Empire, and Poverty to Slavery.

FINIS.

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ERRATUM.

In Page 31, 19th and 20th Lines, read "who with "their Lives have defended, let us preſerve inviolate "a Conſtitution, whoſe perfections induced."

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